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CHURCHMAN'S MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

APRIL, 1821.

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On the Liturgy.

ESSAY II.

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"....
Psalm xcvi. 9.

SOME remarks were made in a former essay, with the design of vindicating the use of a Liturgy, as a vehicle of public devotion. A brief historical view of that which is used in our own churches, was attempted—its peculiarities were pointed out, and vindicated on the ground of primitive usage, and scriptural authority. We propose, in the present number, to resume the enquiry where it was then interrupted, and to offer a few remarks on the several portions of it in succession—referring our readers for more extensive information, to the works of Sparrow, Wheatley, Shepherd, Comber, and others, who have treated the subject at large.

That we may not rush unprepared to the sacred office of divine worship, our attention is arrested by a sentence or two from Holy Writ, designed to reclaim our wandering thoughts, and fix them on the work before us. "Keep thy foot," says wise man, "when thou goest to the house of God: Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." Have you entered into the courts of the Lord, without a proper reverence for the dread Being in whose presence you stand? "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all

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the earth keep silence before him." Are you a mere formalist? "Rend your *hearts*, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God." Have you adopted the spirit of the self-righteous Pharisee? "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Are you grieved and wearied with the burthen of your sins? "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." In this manner are these sacred selections adapted to every possible variety of character, and form a very proper introduction to the services that follow.

The *Exhortation* is a very solemn address, intended to remind us of the purposes for which we are assembled. We do not go to the house of God to hear an eloquent sermon, nor to play the critic on human performances; but, "to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness—to set forth the most worthy praises of God, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." The chief design of this address, is, "to instruct the ignorant, to admonish the negligent, to support the fearful, to comfort the doubtful, to caution the formal, and to check the presumptuous; since all this variety of temper is found in every mixed congregation."

The *Confession* itself is most solemn in its form, and comprehensive in its meaning; for it includes all

kinds of sin, both of omission and commission—it speaks of leaving things undone which ought to have been done, and of doing things which ought not to have been done. The design, in giving this general form to the confession of sins, was, to allow each person the privilege of mentally confessing the sins he has individually “committed, by thought, word, and deed, against the divine Majesty,” in terms which may be used by all the congregation.

If it be objected to this form of confession, that it does not specify *particular* sins; it may be replied, that if it did descend to a minute specification, it would cease to be a *general* confession, and would consequently be inappropriate to a mixed assembly; for we would charitably hope there is no *one* transgression, in which every member of a christian congregation continually allows himself; and we are sure there are none which may not be included in the confession we use.

We have all offended against the holy laws of God in some way or other: but we have each our own way of doing it. The plague of one man’s heart is his pride—of another, is his intemperate passion—of another, is his worldliness—of another, is his deadness in religion: and it is expected that every devout worshipper will accompany the general confession of his life, with a particular confession of his own personal sins, in his heart.

We take the liberty to remind our readers of the propriety of their being present at the *beginning* of the service, that they may prepare themselves by confession of their sins, for the devotions that follow. By delaying to enter the sanctuary till after the worship has begun, they not only disturb the devotions of others, but lose the opportunity of casting down their own burthens at the foot of the cross. “Then I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord; and

so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.”

When confession of sins has been made both by people and priest, the latter stands and pronounces the declaration of absolution, or remission of sins, “to all those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the Holy Gospel.” It is not, as some have idly supposed, that the minister claims the power of conveying pardon to this or that particular person; since, if he had such a power, his want of that knowledge of hearts which would enable him to apply it aright, would hinder him from exercising it: but as one to whom “the ministry of reconciliation has been committed,” he has received “power and commandment, to declare and pronounce to the people, *being penitent*, the absolution and remission of their sins.” And if you will take the pains to examine the rubrick, you will find that this is not called an *absolution* of sins, but a *declaration* of absolution. It expresses God’s willingness to forgive the penitent, and the terms on which he is willing to receive them into favour, and cannot with fairness be construed to mean any thing else.

We cannot but remark the propriety with which our public devotions are introduced by confession of sins, and the declaration of absolution. We are moved, in the exhortation, “to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same,” preparatory to the succeeding exercises of thanksgiving and prayer. In this, we imitate the example of the early Christians, who, according to St. Basil, “immediately upon their entering the house of prayer, made confession of their sins to God, with much sorrow, concern, and tears, every man pronouncing his own confession with his own mouth.” And in the recorded prayers of Ezra and Daniel, we find them introducing their requests in the same way; and

indeed, the practice is so consonant to reason, that its propriety is manifest at once.

The congregation, then, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and being exhorted to draw near in full assurance of faith, enter upon the work of thanksgiving and supplication, by joining in the Lord's Prayer. You know the origin of this prayer, and how it came to be styled "*the Lord's*"—how the disciples of our Saviour came to him, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples;"—and how he gave them that form of sound words, which has been carefully inserted in our Liturgy. Whatever imperfection may be found in the other parts of the service, there is surely none in this; and it is because "we know not what to pray for as we ought," that the Lord's Prayer is introduced into every distinct office of our ritual. We can indeed justify our Liturgy before men, but we presume not to do it before God, even whose ministering spirits are charged with folly. "Wherefore, it is not the love of repetition," as one observes, "but the fear of imperfection, that hath induced the Church to insert the Lord's Prayer in all her offices; that by its perfection, she might atone for the infirmities of her own composites."

There is a manifest reference in the general exhortation, to the order in which the parts of worship succeed each other; for the object of religious assemblies is declared to be, "to render thanks to God for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." Now we "render thanks for the benefits, and set forth the worthy praises of God," in the Psalms and Hymns which precede the Lessons; we "hear his most holy word," when we listen to the

chapters from the Old and New Testament; and we proceed to "ask the things necessary for the body and soul," in the prayers and Litany which follow. The order here observed, is the order of nature and of propriety; for is it not reasonable that we should set forth the perfections of the Deity, before we declare our own wants;—to render thanks for the benefits already received, before we presume to ask for more?

The work of praise is introduced by a verse from the 51st Psalm, which forms a very proper transition from confession of sins to thanksgiving—"O Lord, open thou our lips; and our mouth shall show forth thy praise." We then rise from our kneeling posture, and give glory to God in a doxology, which has been used in the Church from the earliest ages. Our authority for ascribing glory to each of the persons in the Godhead, is founded on the language of our Saviour's commission to his disciples, to baptize "in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*;" for while the words of that commission stand on record, we are not afraid to consider them as equally the objects of adoration.

"Praise ye the Lord," is a literal translation of the Hebrew word, "Hallelujah;"—a word so sacred, that the Church in early times scrupled to translate it. It is mixed indeed with loftier hymns, and sung in higher strains than ours; for the exiled Apostle heard in one of his visions, "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying, Alleluiah; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The versicle is re-echoed by the united voice of the congregation, "the Lord's name be praised;" and in what words shall praise be offered more acceptably, than in those of the sweet Psalmist of Israel?

The portion of Psalms, or, as it is

styled in the Hebrew, "the Book of Praises," appointed for the day, is introduced by an Anthem from the 95th and 96th Psalms, which was styled in the old Liturgies, "the Invitatory Psalm," because it contains an invitation to join in the worship of God—"O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation."

If it be asked, why we repeat the Doxology at the end of this anthem; we reply, that the Doxology is but a paraphrase on the song of the Seraphim, "holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty; which art, and which wast, and which art to come:" and as they above do it *continually*, it is no harm in us to do it *frequently*.

Concerning the book of Psalms, I have barely time to observe, that it is, of all parts of the Sacred Writings, the best calculated for public devotion; that they composed most of the temple service; that they have been used in the Christian Church from the time of our Saviour; and that every worshipper may find something in them, accommodated to his particular case. To quote the words of an old divine on this subject—"Hath any one received a blessing? In the Psalms he hath a thanksgiving. Hath he any to be requested? In the Psalms he hath a petition. Hath he any evil to be removed? In the Psalms he hath a deprecation. Would he delight his soul in meditations? In the Psalms, the scenes of creation and Providence are opened in beautiful representations. Would he prostrate his soul in humiliations? In the Psalms he finds many that are penitential."

Having set forth the most worthy praises of God, in the Psalms and Doxologies, we are invited to listen to his most holy word; and thus, an agreeable relief is given to the mind, by recalling it from a state of action, to one of mere attention. The *affections* which had been previously engaged, are suffered to rest, while the

understanding is called into exercise. The Scriptures are introduced into our worship, on the principle, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" and as "Moses was read in the Synagogue every Sabbath day," so do we esteem it an excellence in our Church, that the Scriptures are read in the hearing of the people. The chapters are selected alternately from the Old and New Testament, to show the harmony between the Law and the Gospel; "for what is the Law but the Gospel foreshewed; and what is the Gospel but the Law fulfilled?" Things prefigured in the one, are accomplished in the other; and for this reason, the first Lesson is read from the Old Testament, and the second from the New. Take for example the Lessons for Christmas day; and you will find the first, from the 9th of Isaiah, to contain a prediction of our Saviour's birth; while the second, from the 2d of Luke, gives the fulfilment of the prophecy.

But the chapters are not read in immediate succession. They are separated by a Hymn to the Trinity, most worthy the spouse of Christ, and fit for the tongue of men and angels. Amongst all devotional compositions which are not the work of immediate inspiration, our *Te Deum* justly stands the highest, for sublimity of thought, and depth of devotion;—for glow of feeling, and majesty of expression. It was composed, as is generally believed, by St. Ambrose, on the occasion of St. Augustin's baptism; and has been used in the Church for more than 1400 years. Its name is derived from the two first words of the Latin, in which it was originally composed—*Te Deum laudamus*, "we praise thee, O God." When the Lessons treat of the creation, or any of the wonderful works of God, we substitute the Hymn which follows;—"O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever." It

is a paraphrase of the 148th Psalm, and is an elegant summons to all the works of God to join in setting forth his glory. The song is attributed to the three holy children, on the occasion of their deliverance from the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, and has been used in the Christian Church from the earliest ages.

After the second Lesson is completed, we are again summoned to the work of praise, by joining in the 100th Psalm, or the Hymn of Zacharias on the birth of John the Baptist; and then we rehearse the articles of our belief. The creed is styled the Apostles' Creed, from an opinion which long prevailed among Christians, that it was drawn up by the Apostles themselves; and altho' this opinion can scarcely be maintained, yet we have the best assurance that it was compiled at a very early period, nearly in the form in which it now appears. The position of the Creed is immediately *after* the reading of the Scriptures; for as "faith cometh by hearing," it is proper that *confession* of faith should follow as its natural effect; and it stands moreover as a fit *introduction* to the Prayers; "for how can we call on him, in whom we have not believed?" This confession is to be made by the whole congregation; for it is not sufficient that a Christian believe rightly in his heart, unless "with his mouth he makes confession unto salvation."

The Creed is so drawn up, as that the declarations of belief, are the declarations of *every individual* who repeats it. We do not say, *We* believe in God the Father, but *I* believe; so that the priest himself, who is elsewhere the public minister of the congregation, seems here to become a private member of it, confessing only for himself.

Thus far we have marked the order, and beauty, and variety of the arrangement, and the rich and scriptural materials wherewith the Litur-

gy is composed. We have seen our Church acknowledging her sins in the confession; then setting forth God's most worthy praise, in the Psalms; then hearing his most holy word in the Lessons; and she now proceeds "to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." This she does in a series of prayers, studded and enriched with gems of scripture, and consecrated by the breath of saints and martyrs, who are now with God. Let others pass by these devotions of holy men of old, and present their offerings in other censers:—we blame them not for a difference of taste:—but we love to join hands with the confessors of early times, when Christianity was yet pure and lovely, and utter the same prayers which trembled on their dying lips. O could we but catch the spirit which animated them, "the beauty of holiness" would become as apparent in the *use* of our Liturgy, as it is now in the theory.

Although we frequently pass from one office of devotion to another, the transitions are never abrupt, but are commonly introduced by one or more versicles pronounced by the minister, and re-echoed by the people. In the present case, the salutation of Boaz to the reapers, "the Lord be with you," is adopted by the minister, and responded by the congregation, preparatory to the exercise of prayer.

It may be proper here to remark on the expediency of having our prayers broken into short petitions, instead of offering them in one continued request. They were made short, in imitation of our Lord's Prayer, and in accommodation to human weakness, which will not suffer the attention to be kept constantly on the stretch. They were made concise, that some attribute of the Deity, corresponding with the subject of the petition, might be introduced; as in the Collect for Peace, we say, "O God, who art the author of *Peace*,

and lover of *Concord*." And finally, the concise form of composition was adopted, that every petition might be offered up in "the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord:" and this course seems to be recommended in his declaration, that "whatsoever we ask the Father in *his* name, he will give it us."

The Collects for *Peace*, which stand first in order, both in the morning and evening service, are translated word for word from the Sacramentary of St. Gregory, a Liturgy compiled by him about 1230 years ago. In that for the morning, we pray for outward peace, and preservation from the injuries, insults, and wicked designs of men. In that for the evening, we petition for inward tranquility, for "that peace which the world cannot give"—for that peace, in short, which springs from the testimony of a quiet and unrepenting conscience.

The prayers which follow,—that for grace in the morning, and that for aid against perils in the evening, are of equal antiquity. That for grace is very proper to be used in the *beginning* of the day, when we are about to go forth into the midst of temptations: nor is that for aid against perils less seasonable in the evening, when we are about to commit ourselves to the protection of Him, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Thus far we have prayed for ourselves only. But we are exhorted to pray for "kings, and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." We therefore offer up our petitions for our civil rulers, that they may "be endued with heavenly gifts, and be inclined to do the will of God, and walk in his ways." This, as well as the following prayer, was translated from the Sacramentary of St. Gregory, and has held its place in the Church for thirteen centuries.

Having made our supplications for our temporal rulers, we proceed to

pray for our spiritual guides, and "for the congregations committed to their charge." In this Collect we pray for spiritual blessings only. In petitioning for other favours, we may, through ignorance, make improper requests, and "so ask and receive not, because we ask amiss." But in supplicating for larger donations of the spirit, we have the assurance that our request is not improper, since it is a donation of which we always stand in need.

But because we are directed to make prayers and intercessions "for all men," we pray in the next place for all sorts and conditions of men; that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may live agreeably to their profession, and that the kingdom of the Redeemer may yet be extended, and his saving health made known among all nations. A general thanksgiving succeeds, in which our creation, preservation, and other temporal blessings, are noticed; but above all, the inestimable love of God, in the redemption of the world by his Son, is made a particular theme of thanksgiving.

The prayer composed by Chrysostom, reflecting on the great and necessary requests that have been made, and desiring their fulfilment in the way most expedient for us, is properly added at the close; and the whole service is finished by the benedictory prayer of St. Paul, which he added in substance at the close of most of his Epistles.

The limits of a single essay will scarcely permit me to bestow any thing more than a slight consideration on the *Litany*, which indeed is a complete service by itself. If, in any part of the devotions, we are supposed to infuse a deeper earnestness into our prayers, it is while praying in the Litany. If the fire but glowed before, it is now supposed to burn. It begins, like all other Litanies both ancient and modern, by a general cry for mercy. Here are no

rhetorical or complimentary flourishes,—no hunting after tropes and figures of speech, no tricks of eloquence to lead the imagination astray; but an earnest and anxious prayer, that our iniquities may not be remembered against us. Its language is that of a man who is afraid of being lost. It is the language of earnestness—of entreaty—I might say, of distress. It embodies what may be called *the agony of prayer*, and in its deprecations of evil, and supplications for mercy, may be found expressions, fit for the mouth of a half converted sinner, already on the wing for the judgment seat. Shall we say, there is not an article in the catalogue of human ills, that the Litany does not include;—not a good, temporal, spiritual, or eternal, for which it does not provide a petition? Is there an affecting passage in the whole life of the man of sorrows, from “the mystery of his holy incarnation” to his exaltation into glory, that is not appealed to, to kindle the relentings of our Judge? Does it not rise in ardor, and fire, and strength of expression, till it brings us quite to the seat of “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world,” and leave us *there* to cry for mercy? It has appeared to me, that if we could only attain the spirit of those who composed it, we should be the best Christians on earth; and we stand deeply indebted to those holy men, for showing us to what a height of devotion human nature is capable of rising, unaided by any thing more than the ordinary gifts of the spirit.

I have now proceeded as far as my limits will allow, in explaining the properties and arrangement of the Liturgy; and although the nature of the subject precluded me from aiming at entertainment, I should be satisfied with the higher merit of *instructing* those, whose opportunities for information have not allowed them an accurate knowledge of their forms of prayer. It has appeared, in the

course of these remarks, that most of these devotional pieces have been more than twelve centuries in the Christian Church, and that many of them have a far more ancient date. They have stood the test of time and constant use—a test the most effectual of any, in deciding on perfection. When we use them, we seem to feel a nearer kindredship with that bright and early family of saints, who walked with God; and who, ere they departed for that better country they sought, bequeathed to us the rich inheritance of their devotional writings. Nor do we hold fellowship with these alone. In the use of these prayers, we stand connected with that Holy Apostolical Church of the British Isles, the brightest light in the candlestick of the Reformation. The voice of our intercession is responded from the godly Host of the Church of England:—we put our incense into one censer, and present it in one united offering, to the Lord of Hosts. Thus, our sabbaths present the spectacle of “a company which no man can number, standing before the throne and the Lamb,” and ascribing with united voice, “salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:”—

“Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,

“But all their joys are one.”

May I not hope that this brief review of our Liturgy may have the effect of introducing it more generally into our congregations, and of exciting them to a more spiritual use of it? If they can join in its prayers, hereafter, with deeper devotion, and its anthems of praise with superior elevation of soul, I shall in part be satisfied. But I confess I would see the time, when every worshipper that comes within the walls of our churches, shall come to take the praises of God in his mouth, and to bear his part audibly in the songs of our Zion—“young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name only

is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth." The spectacle of an assembled congregation, in which no one voice is mute to the praises of Jehovah, in which the heart and the tongue are perfectly in unison, is one on which the hierarchy of heaven might look down with delight. Would not such an assembly present the nearest copy of their own perfect homage? For they also "cry one to another" in alternate responses; and the sound of their worship, like "the sound of mighty thunders, and the voice of many waters," bespeak them *engaged* in their work. And while we feel the vantage ground on which we stand, it will become us to remember, that as our privileges have been, so will be our accountability. God has not given us the use of this Liturgy, that we should be content with merely praising it. I may admire the ship prepared to convey me from distant and desolate shores to my native land; but unless I embark in it, I shall never arrive there. When therefore we plant our feet within the gates of our Jerusalem, let us not come merely to admire the fair temple that adorns it, but to bend low before the footstool of Him who dwelleth there, and worship him in the beauty of holiness.



To the Editors of the Churchman's Magazine.

WHILE I agree with the writer of a piece in your last number, on *Religious Theories*, that they have contributed not a little to perplex the interpretation of Scripture, and range the Christian world under the hostile banners of adventurous and opposing Theologians, there was a passage or two in his essay which struck me as requiring explanation. He observes, that the "Holy Scriptures represent man as fallen, and his nature sinful; but they do not very clearly define the limits of this depravity." In some sense I consider the observation as true; and I presume the writer

meant by it, that the Scriptures have not expressly ascertained the *quantum* of wickedness in the heart of man, or how much worse he might have been than he really is. That the human character is not depraved to the full extent of its powers, is a position which may be proved both by Scripture and experience; for an apostle has declared that "evil men and seducers, shall wax worse and worse; deceiving, and being deceived." If, then, the human character is susceptible of this downhill progress, and the proofs are daily before our eyes, it follows that there are lower stages in depravity, which are attainable only by practice in wickedness, and that human corruption might have been more *deep*, although it could not have been more *universal*.

But the Scriptures *do* exhibit a view of this subject, in which one would suppose all men can acquiesce, who will not insist on being wise above what is written. They ascribe every thing like *godliness* in the creature, to the influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart; and declare that without this influence, we can do nothing pleasing and acceptable to God. This is the temperate ground assumed in the public formularies of our Church, and I like her the better for her moderation. I confess myself unable to discern either the wisdom or the expediency of going beyond this simple statement, since it ascribes all the glory and merit of salvation to the Creator; and more than this cannot be done even by those over-curious theologians, who would prove by logic that men are naturally no better than devils. This is a kind of extravagance which men will not, and ought not to believe, for it manifestly is not true. Yet it has been gravely taught by masters in Israel, who have denied, at the same time, that previously to that change in the heart which is termed conversion, men are *wholly* destitute of the

grace of God. How both positions can be true, and yet the affairs of life go on with any tolerable decency, they have not condescended to explain; but it is to be hoped they have some satisfactory way of reconciling what seems at least to be an inconsistency.

Another remark in the essay which attracted my attention, was the following:—"Holy Scriptures represent a particular class of men, as the elect of God,—chosen for their obedience, and rewarded for their faith." Had the writer said, chosen *unto* obedience, the phraseology would have been at least more apostolical. The elect of God are those, who hear and obey their christian calling, and walk worthy of their vocation.—"They be made the sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." I am so far from designing to enter into this ill-starred discussion, that I am willing to let the subject of it rest in the bosom of God, till the day when we shall no longer "know in part," but see all the obscurities in the divine economy explained. That a great deal of crude and raw theology, under the title of "the godly consideration of election," has been uttered from the pulpit, I verily believe; and as heartily do I wish, that no more heads had been engaged in the discussion, than were competent to it. That a young and adventurous theologian, confident in his own prowess, and flushed with the hope of victory, should grapple without fear with a subject which has put the ablest at a stand, is a thing to be expected; but he will show his wisdom by receding, as he advances in years, from a controversy, which can lead to no profitable issue.

I cannot but express a hope that you will continue to occupy the neutral ground you appear to have assu-

med, in relation to this subject; and that while so many are disposed at the present day to run into distant and opposite extremes, *one* Church at least may be found, disposed to carry the balance between the contending parties—one communion, in which all moderate men may unite. The time, I think, is coming, when the need of such a Church will be great and obvious—when men of real piety and sober views shall cast about them in search of a formulary of faith, which embodies all the doctrines *necessary* to salvation, without dogmatizing on those points of minor importance, which have set the christian world at variance with each other. S.



Family Prayers, composed principally in expressions taken from the Holy Scriptures, and from the established Services of the Church of England. By the Rev. Thomas Cotterill, A. M. New-York: published by J. Eastburn & Co.

Family Worship; a course of Morning and Evening Prayers for every day in the month. To which is prefixed a Discourse on Family Religion. By James Bean. Philadelphia: published by S. Potter & Co.

WE introduce the titles of these books at the head of this article more with the design of calling the attention of our readers to the subject of Family Worship, than of giving the works in question a distinct and lengthened Review. What we have to say of them will be comprehended in a few words. The author of each has proceeded on nearly the same plan; which was that of furnishing families with a collection of serious and animated prayers, suited to the domestic fireside; and considering the number in each collection, more diversity both in language and in matter could scarcely be look-

ed for, in a compilation of this character. The sentiments expressed in them, are, in our apprehension, highly evangelical and devout;—the foundation of christian trust is correctly stated; and if the authors have left us any thing to wish, it is, that they had adopted a style more easy and flowing, in the place of the short and abrupt sentences into which the petitions are often broken, although we are aware the latter style of composition is not without its advantages. On the whole, either volume may be regarded as a valuable acquisition to those heads of families, who preserve the godly custom of calling their children and domestics together both morning and evening, for the purposes of divine worship, and we could wish to see some work of this description adorning the parlour of every inhabitant in our land. It would look as though religion had not yet quite deserted us, and might be regarded as a pledge that our children were “trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” more extensively than we fear is at present the case.

“The arguments in support of family religion,” remarks Mr. Bean, “lie in a small compass. They are at the same time so obvious to a serious Christian, that it may almost seem unnecessary to insist upon them. It is scarcely possible that a man, conversant with the Holy Scriptures, and truly concerned for the temporal and eternal interests of those who are under his care, can doubt of its being his duty to worship God in his family. With such a person, the commendations given to Abraham* will have the force of an express injunction.

“And how reasonable a thing is it, that God should be honoured in that community, which derives all its comforts from him. In a family, there are mercies received from God, of which all the members are equal par-

takers. How fit and becoming a thing is it then, that all the members should join in acts of devout homage to their common protector and benefactor.

“The assembling every day to worship the Supreme Being, has a tendency to produce the happiest effects in forming the conduct of our domestics. To recal the attention of a family frequently to God, tends to impress the members of it with an idea of his authority, and their dependence upon his providence. It holds forth religion to them as a duty not of occasional, but daily obligation. The constant reading of the Holy Scriptures, the frequent imploring of the pardon of sin, and petitioning for grace to act aright toward God and man, imperceptibly convey into their minds, a knowledge of the duties which they owe to God, to themselves, and to each other.

“Accordingly, we find that where religious order prevails in families, there a knowledge of right and wrong obtains; and although evil passions occasionally discover themselves, we do not see their *unrestrained* violence: the good effects of daily instruction, and daily worship, are manifest in the tempers and conduct of the domestics, amidst all their imperfections.

“On the other hand, in those houses in which instruction is never heard, nor any act of devotion seen, we observe a deplorable ignorance of moral obligation. We therefore cannot wonder, that there should be so general a complaint of the behaviour of servants: for what means are there employed in many families to teach them their duty? How unlikely is it, that there should be a steady obedience rendered to man, where the fear of God is not inculcated, either by precept or example!

“If therefore we consult merely our own comfort, the best course we can pursue, is to tread in the steps of those godly men, whose houses were

* Genesis xviii. 19.

consecrated, by the daily performance of family worship. The comfort of families is so effectually destroyed by careless, idle, unfaithful, and dissolute servants, that a remedy for this serious and increasing evil would be generally accounted a very great benefit to the public. But there is no reason to believe that a radical cure will be obtained till the almost exploded piety of former times is revived, by making religious instruction and worship a stated observance in our houses."

We believe there are many heads of families who acknowledge the duty and profitableness of family prayer, (and who indeed does not acknowledge them?) but are deterred by a false modesty from introducing a religious custom, which may appear strange at first in the eyes of their children and domestics. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that a weakness of religious principle lies at the foundation of the difficulty, and that the consequent necessity of taking some steps to overcome it is the more obvious. No sinful course can be broken off without an effort; and sins of *omission* are corrected with peculiar difficulty, because they are much less calculated to alarm. The thing most wanted in the case before us, is christian resolution. Let the person who wavers, decide at once on doing his duty, and he will soon find the work pleasant as well as profitable. After a few trials he will proceed with ease to himself, and feel no more of those uneasy suggestions which rise to reproach him, whenever he thinks of this neglected duty.

We close our remarks with another extract or two from Mr. Bean's introductory discourse, of which we have already given a specimen. After stating that the christian instructor will feel it incumbent on him to set before his hearers the whole of their duty, and direct them as far as

possible to the right performance of it, the author observes:—

"Much further than this *he* cannot proceed; but the *work* must proceed, or the labour already bestowed on it, may be lost.

"There is great reason to believe, that though his discourses may have produced very serious impressions while he was delivering them, the desires which were excited by them will die away, unless cherished by some further application of truth to the mind. The seed which has been sown must not be left to itself; it must be watched; in order that it may bring forth fruit. To these things, the individuals who hear the word of God, must attend for themselves. To these, the masters of families are bound to attend, for the good of those who are committed to their care. He therefore, who from Christian principles endeavours to *provide for those of his own household*, will follow the Sower, not only with his private prayers, but with such family exercises, as tend to guard and cherish the precious seed that has been sown.

"Where these duties are wisely and diligently performed, the public instructor rejoices in seeing the fruit of his labour. But what fruit of them is he likely to discover among those families, in which the domestics neither hear nor see any thing that is calculated to remind them of the public worship, or that does any way correspond with it? The servant will think (if he think at all on the subject) that religion consists in nothing but going to church: for he sees nothing more in his master's religion.

"Children and servants are influenced by what is *always* addressing itself to them. They judge of things, not from what one man says one day in a week, but from what every person is saying every day. The customs, the habits of a family, are the

things which form their opinions, and their character ; and if among these, there be no act which is intended to do honour to religion, there is not only nothing done to *carry on* the design of public instruction, but many things which will *defeat* that design ; even though not so intended.

“ It is from neglecting to follow public with private instruction, among other causes, that a standing ministry in the Church does not produce all the good effects for which it was ordained. They who object to this institution, should consider the limits of the public instructor’s power ; and in estimating the useful tendency of his office, they ought to allow for the failure of those, who should take up the duty for which he is set apart, at that point, beyond which he cannot proceed.

“ The true minister of Christ is ever labouring to bring masters of families to carry the work of instruction into their own province. It is not a crowded auditory that satisfies him. He will be ready to weep over the multitudes he views from the pulpit, if he know, that though they seem to hang upon his lips, there is at home, no altar, no priest, no sacrifice, nor one true sign of genuine piety to be found. He estimates his usefulness in his pastoral character, not merely by the number of his hearers, but by the practical effect which his discourses have on them. And among other enquiries, in order to ascertain this effect, he endeavours to know whether there be any family religion among them. When he sees religion in their houses, he has reason to conclude, it has properly affected their hearts ; and that, not only they, but *their children after them*, may partake of the benefit of his earnest endeavours. But while religion is absent there, he considers, that however he may be commended as a preacher, he has reason to doubt whether, after all, his labours have

produced any great effect upon his hearers.

“ Such being the importance of family religion, it is hoped, that no person who has any just pretensions to piety, will be deterred from the duty he owes to his domestics, by the *ridicule* he may incur, in reviving that ancient and godly custom which is here enforced.

“ Is it becoming a man of sense and seriousness, to suffer himself to be stopped in the prosecution of what he knows to be reasonable—of what he believes will increase the honour due unto God, the improvement and happiness of his children and servants, and the benefit of society, by the derision of some thoughtless observer, who never sat down seriously to consider what he chooses to ridicule ?

“ We should stand prepared to meet with christian firmness, that overbearing spirit of banter, which attempts to put every thing grave and serious out of countenance. Let us arm ourselves against it, by considering, that it is scarcely possible to be well employed, and at the same time to escape its attack. How inglorious is it, to surrender in a good cause to such an antagonist !”



From the Christian Observer.

In the course of your useful labours you have often directed your readers to tests, by which they may prove the validity of their religious profession ; and many of your correspondents have furnished you with excellent papers, urging the necessity of practical holiness, and an universal renewal of heart. The true characteristics of genuine piety have been clearly and forcibly described in your pages ; and your warning voice has not failed to admonish the careless professor, of the dangers to which he is liable, and of the specious delusions into which he is apt to fall.

Still, however, there is room for farther admonition ; and, indeed, of so great importance is a right estimate of our religious state, that repetition here may well be pardoned ; and line upon line, precept upon precept, well borne with. In this case, as in most others, particulars are much better calculated to affect than generals : hence arises the necessity of dwelling with peculiar earnestness and extended consideration on separate, and, if I may so express myself, individual points of christian practice. If only general tests of piety are proposed, the deceitful heart of man will easily select, for its own trial, those which are likely to bear most lightly on itself ; and will with equal ease contrive to overlook others, the application of which to its own case it has too much reason to shrink from. It will be satisfied with a favourable conclusion drawn from the slightest examination, and will take it for granted that, if a correspondence of any sort is discovered between the lowest standard and its own state, farther enquiry is unnecessary. Let this consideration be my apology for addressing you on the present occasion, and for attempting to bring before a certain class of your readers a test to which they may particularly refer, and of which they cannot well elude the force.

The test to which I have above referred, is *family religion* ;—that religion which enforces the right performance of all relative and social duties ; which enables masters and mistresses to carry on all their domestic concerns with meekness, patience, forbearance, and christian order ; and which instructs those in subordinate situations to act diligently and faithfully in their respective departments, and to order themselves “lowly and reverently to all their betters.” It is obvious, that, wherever real religion, which requires truth in the inward parts, and which proposes not merely to affect the

outward conduct and produce general decorum, but to reach the very source of error and to renovate the heart—it is obvious, that, wherever this religion truly exerts its influence, its effects will be seen not so much in a man’s public life, as in his ruling dispositions, and the usual tenor of his actions in private. Now these are best observed in the bosom of his family, where he feels himself under less restraint, and acts with less disguise : in domestic life, therefore, are we authorized to seek the evidence of a heart renewed by divine grace.

Let me, then, earnestly call upon those of your readers who are heads of families, to examine, with the utmost seriousness, whether they are anxious that their light should first shine before those immediately around them, and then be diffused more generally ? Whether in the apparently trifling affairs of daily life, and of perpetual occurrence, they are careful to maintain that evenness of temper, and absence of irritation, which are requisite to mark the christian character ? A scrutiny too strict cannot here be instituted ; and yet satisfaction may be obtained without much laborious and abstruse research. —The enquiry proposed is not into some occult science, or some latent truth ; it is into the obvious testimony of outward conduct, of which every man for himself, on slight recollection, must be sufficiently conscious. Lamentable as is the confession, truth compels us to allow that many, who make a very fair profession of religion, are at the same time in private negligent of their duties, and the prey of bad tempers. Such persons in public appear zealous for the honour of religion ; they even make sacrifices to support its interests : but go into their families, and you may find them little concerned to educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and probably still less anxious to impress the minds of their servants with the im-

portance of religion. Family worship is sometimes altogether neglected, often carelessly performed, and it is suffered to meet with interruption from the most trivial causes: business and pleasure both furnish their quota of excuses. Such persons, in public, may be extolled for their benevolence and beneficence, for amiable manners and endearing behaviour: but if you follow them into the domestic circle, you may find them peevish and discontented, unhappy themselves, and apparently endeavouring to make others so. In public, they may be admired for patience, forbearance, and humility; in private, they may discover haughtiness and pride, which cannot bear the least contradiction; self-sufficiency and arrogance, which can submit to no control. Abroad, they may have the praise of liberality of sentiment, and of that charity which thinketh no evil; while at home they give way to mean suspicion and unmanly jealousy; every little error that happens to interfere with their wishes, is aggravated and treated with severity; and every inadvertent opposition of sentiment, or conduct, from those whose faults ought most readily to be excused, far from being treated mildly, and charitably viewed in the fairest light, serves to excite asperity and ill nature. In short, all the excellencies of such professors of religion are displayed, where they have a chance of being observed and admired; but in vain may they be sought where their lustre would be concealed, and where flattering admiration would be withheld. This remark leads us to conclude, that the religion of these persons is one of these two sorts: *it either has the applause and commendation of men for its object—or it is satisfied with human approbation as its criterion.* In the former case, the hypocrisy is so shocking that one would charitably hope few are open to the charge: the latter case is, I am afraid, fre-

quent: and to it, therefore, we ought especially to direct our attention: its consequences are fatal, and its nature highly insidious; double caution is therefore necessary. People who have not much firmness or decision of character, and who therefore shrink from contests with their neighbours, with whom also their desire of general approbation prevents them from embroiling themselves, often acquire, from this habit of concession, a reputation for kindness and benevolence to which they are by no means entitled. For in private life, and in domestic concerns, where they do not dread to encounter opposition, and of course have not the same motive to be mild and yielding, they shew themselves in very different colours; and, it is to be feared, not unfrequently manifest towards an unoffending wife or child, or a faithful servant, the unkind feelings to which some public provocation which they dare not resent, may have given rise. They have, perhaps, viewed Christianity in its true light, as a scheme of kindness, charity and peace; and, admiring its general excellence, have fallen in with it, as far as it suited their natural temper; but, from a species of self-deception, which is easily accounted for, they satisfy themselves with possessing a reputation for these qualities among their fellow creatures, instead of possessing the qualities themselves which are thus falsely imputed to them. In proportion as the reputation which they gain in this way increases, their religious confidence is augmented; and many, even pious people, are so ready to extol such characters, and to ascribe their actions to motives which perhaps they never felt, that they are led by the general suffrage to conclude that their conduct fully entitles them to the name and privileges of true Christians. Their private and domestic conduct, in the mean time, is but little taken into the account; and if conscience occasion-

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ally whispers the inconsistency of their public character and private life, its remonstrances are silenced by a triumphant recollection of the *general* estimation in which they are held; while their very suspicions are construed into a proof of their humility.

Let all who read this paper seriously examine themselves; and if any of the foregoing observations apply to them, let them consider that they are now solemnly warned that human approbation is no safe criterion of the favour of God; that he, whatever be his character among men, must be pronounced destitute of real religion, who does not manifest its power in all the concerns of life, private as well as public, trivial as well as important; and that the domestic scene is the proper field for the display of all the Christian graces.

I beg leave to conclude with two general remarks.

In the first place, I would observe, of how great importance it is to direct professing Christians to a constant and serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures. These will effectually teach us the nature of true religion, and set right all our mistakes on this important subject. But to this end they must be read with fixed attention, as involving our eternal interests; with sacred awe, as sanctioned by divine authority; and with earnest prayer, as requiring to be attended by the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit. I am persuaded, that of those whom it is the object of this paper to address, by far the greater number are such as think themselves excused by their occupations and circumstances from a regular and serious use of the sacred volume.

2dly, Christians should be cautious lest they flatter and deceive those that seem well disposed. Is it not to be feared that great injury is done by the thoughtlessness of pious people in this respect? They feel a lau-

dable joy when they perceive any symptoms of good in those around them; but are they not often too ready to call every hopeful tendency a sure proof of religious progress, and to attribute every well-seeming action to a Christian motive? A little consideration and discernment would teach them a more prudent course, and might preserve those with whom they converse, and on whose characters they too hastily pronounce a flattering verdict, from falling into a most dangerous error.



Bishop White's Memoirs of the Church.

IN calling the attention of the readers of the Magazine to this valuable and interesting publication, it is not my intention to attempt any thing like a formal review. It is my sole object to bring the importance of the work into notice, and thereby to recommend it to my brethren of the Episcopal Church. The venerable author, with his characteristic modesty, sends it into the world, as a plain and simple record of facts, substantiated by authentic documents—without one word of unnecessary comment, or any attempt at mere embellishment. It is precisely such a work as the case required, and such an one, as the author, above all other men, was qualified to execute.

The Narrative, which occupies the first part of the work, contains a brief view of the state of the Church before, and at the conclusion of, the revolutionary war—of the difficulties and obstacles which arose in its reorganization under the new state of the country—and of its settlement, and its progress down to the year 1817. At the commencement of the war, it appears that “there were not more than about eighty parochial “clergymen of the Church of Eng-“land, to the northward and to the “eastward of Maryland; and that “those clergymen derived the great-

“er part of their subsistence from the
 “Society instituted in England, for
 “the propagation of the gospel in
 “foreign parts; with the exception
 “of those resident in the towns of
 “Boston and Newport, and the cities
 “of New-York and Philadelphia:
 “there being no Episcopal congrega-
 “tions out of those towns and cities,
 “held to be of ability to support cler-
 “gymen of themselves. In Mary-
 “land and Virginia (continues the au-
 “thor) “the Episcopal Church was
 “much more numerous, and had le-
 “gal establishments for its support.
 “It was especially numerous in those
 “parts of the said provinces, which
 “were settled when the establish-
 “ments took place; for in the more re-
 “cently settled counties, the mass of
 “the people were of other commun-
 “ions, scarcely known among them
 “in the early period of their histo-
 “ries. In the more southern colo-
 “nies, the Episcopalians were fewer
 “in proportion than in the two last
 “mentioned; but more than in the
 “northern.”—As there was no resi-
 “dent Bishop in America, the Church
 “had no resource for a ministry, but
 “in emigration from the mother coun-
 “try, and by sending its candidates
 “for the ministry, to that country
 “for orders. The first,” (as the au-
 “thor very justly remarks) “could not
 “be the channel of a respectable per-
 “manent supply. And the second,
 “which was the most depended on
 “in the latter years of the colonies,
 “was very troublesome and expen-
 “sive.” These difficulties were nec-
 “essarily increased during the revolu-
 “tionary struggle. There were no
 “means of supplying the vacancies oc-
 “casioned by death, and by the retreat
 “of many of the Episcopal clergy to
 “the mother country, and to the colo-
 “nies still dependent on her. “To
 “add to the evil, (says the author,)
 “many able and worthy ministers,
 “cherishing their allegiance to the
 “king of Great-Britain, and entertain-
 “ing conscientious scruples against

“the use of the Liturgy, under the
 “restriction of omitting the appoint-
 “ed prayers for him, ceased to offici-
 “ate. Owing to these circumstances,
 “the doors of the far greater number
 “of the Episcopal Churches were
 “closed for several years.” During
 “some portion of this period, the au-
 “thor of these Memoirs, was the only
 “resident minister of the Church, in
 “the whole extent of Pennsylvania.

After the acknowledgment of the
 independence of the United States by
 the government of Great-Britain, and
 after an unsuccessful application to
 the Bishop of London for orders for
 American candidates, the first step
 was taken, in the year 1784, towards
 forming a collective body of the Epis-
 copal Church in this country. This
 took place at a meeting held at Bruns-
 wick, New-Jersey, on the 13th and
 14th of May. This meeting was
 composed of three clergymen from
 New-York—three from New-Jersey
 —and three from Pennsylvania. Four
 gentlemen of the laity, from New-
 York and New-Jersey, were also
 present. The author of these Me-
 moirs presided at the meeting, and
 opened it with a sermon. The Rev.
 Benjamin Moore, afterwards Bishop
 of New-York, was secretary. On the
 5th of the ensuing October, a larger
 meeting was held at New-York;—
 “and although (the author remarks)
 “the members composing it were not
 “vested with powers, adequate to the
 “present exigencies of the Church;
 “they happily and with great una-
 “nimity laid down a few general
 “principles, to be recommended in
 “the respective states, as the ground
 “on which a future ecclesiastical go-
 “vernment should be established.”
 This meeting also recommended to
 the Church in the several states, to
 send clerical and lay deputies to a
 meeting to be held in Philadelphia,
 on the 27th of September in the fol-
 lowing year. A Convention accord-
 ingly met at that time and place,
 composed of clerical and lay deputies

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from seven of the thirteen United States, viz: from New-York to Virginia inclusive, with the addition of South-Carolina. For a particular account of the proceedings of this, as well as the subsequent Conventions of the rising Church of America, the reader is referred to the work of Bishop White, and to the published journals of the General Convention. Among the interesting and weighty concerns which engaged the attention of the early Conventions, that of altering the Book of Common Prayer, in such a manner as to adapt it to the recent changes in the civil relations of the country, was justly deemed of primary importance. As I design to make this the subject of future remark, I will close the present article with a few extracts, shewing the manner in which a regular succession of the Episcopacy was eventually obtained in the Church of the United States.

"The Convention (of 1785, says the author) entered on the business of the Episcopacy, with the knowledge that there was now a bishop in Connecticut; consecrated, not in England, but by the non-juring bishops of Scotland. For Doctor Seabury, not meeting assurance of success with the bishops of the former country, had applied to the latter quarter for the succession, which had been there carefully maintained; notwithstanding their severance from the state, in the revolution of 1688. Bishop Seabury had returned to America; and had entered on the exercise of his new function, in the beginning of the preceding summer; and two or three gentlemen of the southern states had received ordination from his hands. Nevertheless, the members of this Convention, although generally impressed with sentiments of respect towards the new bishop; and although, with the exception of a few, alleging nothing against the validity of his Episcopacy,

"thought it the most proper to direct their views in the first instance towards England. In this they were encouraged by information which they thought authentic; assigning for Doctor Seabury's failure these two reasons; that the administration had some apprehension of embroiling themselves with the American government, the sovereignty of which they had so recently acknowledged; and that the bishops were doubtful, how far the act of some clergymen, in their individual capacities, would be acquiesced in by their respective flocks. For the meeting of the former difficulty, it was thought easy to obtain, and there were afterwards obtained, from the executive authorities of the states in which the new bishops were to reside, certificates, that what was sought did not interfere with any civil laws or constitutions. The latter difficulty was thought sufficiently obviated, by the powers under which the present convention was assembled.

"Accordingly, they addressed the Archbishops and Bishops of England; stating, that the Episcopal Church in the United States had been severed by a civil revolution, from the jurisdiction of the parent Church in England; acknowledging the favours formerly received from the Bishops of London in particular; and from the archbishops and bishops in general, through the medium of the Society for propagating the gospel; declaring their desire to perpetuate among the principles of the Church in England, in doctrine, discipline, and worship; and praying, as their lordships would consecrate of the Episcopacy, those persons who should be sent with that view to the Churches in any of the United States respectively."

This opened a door ready to be accomplished of the old others are the Convention had in view of their fears. while some go

Rev. William White, D. D. of Pennsylvania (the author of the present memoirs)—and the Rev. Samuel Provoost, D. D. of New-York, were consecrated Bishops, at Lambeth in England, on the 4th of February, 1787; and on the 19th of September, 1790, the Rev. James Madison, D. D. of Virginia, was consecrated at the same place.—Thus was the succession secured; and the following consecrations have since taken place in the United States:

Rt. Rev. Thomas John Claggett, D. D. of Maryland, 1792. Died, 1816.

Right Rev. Robert Smith, D. D. of South-Carolina, 1795. Died, 1801.

Right Rev. Edward Bass, D. D. of Massachusetts, 1797. Died, 1803.

Right Rev. Abraham Jarvis, D. D. of Connecticut, 1797. Died, 1813.

Right Rev. Benjamin Moore, D. D. of New-York, 1801. Died, 1816.

Right Rev. Samuel Parker, D. D. of Massachusetts, 1804. Died the same year.

Right Rev. John Henry Hobart, D. D. of New-York, 1811.

Rt. Rev. Alexander Viets Griswold, D. D. of the Eastern Diocese, 1811.

Rt. Rev. Theodore Dehon, D. D. of South-Carolina, 1812. Died, 1817.

Right Rev. Richard Channing Moore, D. D. of Virginia, 1814.

Right Rev. James Kemp, D. D. of Maryland, 1814.

Right Rev. John Croes, D. D. of New-Jersey, 1815.

Right Rev. Nathaniel Bowen, D. D. of South-Carolina, 1818.

Right Rev. Philander Chase, D. D. of Ohio, 1819.

Right Rev. Thomas C. Brownell, D. D. of Connecticut, 1819.

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of the REVIEW.

the *Life of Wesley, and the Rise*

of *Progress of Methodism*. By

“add” SOUTHEY, Esq.—2 vols.

“many” “cherish.”

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“ing” “consequence of this very interesting

work. We gave some extracts, and made some remarks, for the purpose of explaining the rise and progress of Methodism, and to illustrate the character of its founder. We now take leave to extend the article by some further observations.

For the Methodists themselves we entertain that respect which is due to all denominations of sincere Christians. As approximating more nearly to our Church than most other denominations, in some of the most essential articles of doctrine, we are perhaps inclined to look on them with some degree of partiality. But it is not to the Methodists as a body that our remarks will have any reference. It is to Methodism as a system that our views are directed. And in commenting upon whatever we deem erroneous in its doctrines, or objectionable in its discipline, we shall endeavour to speak with equal impartiality and freedom.

Many of the errors in doctrine, embraced and earnestly inculcated by Mr. Wesley, in the early part of his career, and during the heat of his enthusiasm, were afterwards, as he grew older, and wiser, and cooler, modified and softened, and almost explained away. Yet his occasional explanations did not wholly banish them from among his followers. We allude particularly to his doctrines of christian *perfection*, and the *assurance* attendant on the justified state. Nothing can be more gratifying to the vanity and spiritual pride of the ostentatious Christian, than the doctrine of perfection. This doctrine was preached with great ardour by Mr. Wesley in early life, but afterwards explained by him to mean less than the word expresses. In justifying the use of the term to Bishop Gibson, he allows that man, in his present state, can no more attain Adamic than Angelic perfection.—“The perfection of which he is capable,” he says, “is the complying with that kind command, *My son,*

give me thy heart. It is the loving the Lord his God, with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind. And in a letter to one of his female disciples, he says, "I want you to be *all love* :—This is the perfection I believe and teach." But these explanations did not render the use of the word less mischievous. His ignorant hearers took it in its more obvious import : And so also his ignorant instructors used it. And even Wesley himself frequently admonishes his preachers for neglecting to enforce a doctrine so well suited to gratify their hearers. "The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall," he says, "the more I am convinced that they have sustained great loss, for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian Perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see wherever this is not done, the believers grow dead and cold. Nor can this be prevented, but by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love." And on another occasion he says, "Here I found the plain reason why the work of God had gained no ground in this circuit all the year. The preachers had given up the Methodist testimony. Either they did not speak of perfection at all (the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust) or they spoke of it only in general terms, without urging the believers to go on to perfection, and to expect it every moment : and wherever this is not earnestly done, the work of God does not prosper." The *perfection* to which the Apostle exhorts the Hebrew converts, is a full acquaintance with the principles of Christianity ; and the perfection he sought himself to attain, was a sincere desire and constant endeavour after higher advancements in holiness ;—the *forgetting those things which were behind*—the progress in the course of godliness which he had already made, *and reaching forth unto those things which were before*—still higher degrees of piety and virtue, that he

might obtain the *prize* of immortal glory. This is a perfection widely different from that which Wesley originally inculcated, and afterwards enjoined on his preachers to enforce, and which their ignorant and deluded hearers embraced. With them, the word was doubtless understood to denote all that faith and holiness, of which the nature of man is capable in the present life ; so that all desires or endeavours for higher attainments were vain and fruitless ; and we fear that this erroneous notion has never been wholly banished from the Methodist creed.

Mr. Wesley's doctrine of *assurance* was not less erroneous, though perhaps less mischievous, than his doctrine of perfection. That all men, who embrace the way of salvation revealed in the gospel, may have a *reasonable* assurance of the safety of their religious state, and of their being in favour with God, is not to be denied. "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit," says the Apostle, "that we are the children of God." The spirit bears witness, by declaring the terms of salvation, in the Holy Scriptures, and delineating the true criteria of the Christian character ; and by cultivating in us such Christian graces, as produce the proper fruits of holiness. Our own spirit bears witness, by the consciousness it affords of our faith, our repentance, and our obedience, and the cognizance which it takes of the fruits which these produce. Still, however, it must be admitted that there is a great difference in the *degrees of assurance* which this joint testimony produces on the minds of Christians. And this diversity is occasioned not less by the difference of their constitutional characters, than by their different religious attainments. Some men are naturally sanguine and confident, others are doubtful and timid. Some are ever ready to believe all they hope, and others are subject to the dominion of their fears. Hence it happens that while some go

cheerfully on their way, *rejoicing in hope*, others who give equal evidence of their religious character, *go mourning all the day long*. But Wesley and his followers use the term *assurance* in a very different sense;—as importing a full, absolute, and infallible certainty of being in a state of salvation. The witness of the Spirit they suppose to be communicated by direct impulse and immediate inspiration, producing an overpowering evidence and conviction in the mind, which are neither to be resisted nor mistaken. This notion of assurance Wesley maintained with great pertinacity, in his correspondence with his brother Samuel. We believe it is still adhered to by a great portion of his followers, though he abandoned it himself at a more sober period of his life. “I believe,” says he, “a consciousness of being in the favour of God (which I do not term full assurance, since it is frequently weakened, nay, perhaps interrupted by returns of doubt and fear) is the common privilege of Christians, fearing God, and working righteousness. Yet I do not affirm that there are no exceptions to this general rule.” He admits that some may be in favour with God, and yet be unconscious of it, by reason of their ignorance of the gospel promises, or from an unhappy temperament of their minds.—“Therefore,” he adds, “I have not, for many years, thought a consciousness of acceptance to be essential to justifying faith.”

Mr. Wesley seems to have been well aware of the tendency of these doctrines of *assurance* and *perfection*. “The true Gospel,” he says, “touches the very edge both of Calvinism and Antinomianism, so that nothing but the mighty power of God can prevent our sliding either into the one or the other.” Many of his followers fell into the errors of both, though Wesley himself can not be justly charged with either. But we can not excuse him for persisting in

the use of expressions, which, he could not fail to perceive, led others into error, when all he intended to convey by the terms, might have been couched in such language as would have neither offended the judicious, nor deluded the ignorant. And he could have hardly expected to escape the charge of inconsistency, when he preached of an imperfect perfection, an assurance which was not assured, and a full sanctification, which left the subject liable to sin.

But Mr. Wesley's notions of *perfection* and *assurance* were not so much insulated doctrines in his creed, as natural consequences of a far greater error:—We allude to his doctrine of *instantaneous and miraculous conversion*. This change he denominated regeneration, or the new birth; and he was accustomed to expatiate upon the latter metaphor with an excursiveness of ill-directed fancy, not less offensive to decency than to good taste. He considered man, in his natural state, not as a *human being*, but as a *fiend*. Not as one depraved, and “far gone from original righteousness,” but as having lost, not only the divine image, but even his human nature by the fall; and as having acquired in their stead, the compound nature of a demon and a brute. “Every man who is born into the world,” says he, “bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will,—the image of the beast in sensual appetites and desires.” By this view of the nature of man he regulated his doctrine of the new-birth. But surely the Scriptures never thus represented the nature of man. As fallen and depraved, they do indeed describe him, and they use the strongest figures to denote the depth of his depravity,—but still a *human being*. Nor do they ever represent him as wholly destitute of those salutary influences of the Spirit, which (whatever might have been our state without a Redeemer,) are now, by the covenant of grace, secured to all

mankind. On the contrary, they represent the Holy Spirit as "given to every man to profit withal; as "knocking at the doors" of the hearts of all men, though many refuse it a welcome there; as "*striving*" with all men, though many, like the Jews of old, "*resist*" its operations,—though many "*quench*" its holy fires, and many "*grieve*" the heavenly visitant.

Mr. Wesley also fell into the common mistake of applying to Christians (not merely such as live in a christian country, but even to such as have been received, by baptism, into covenant with God in their infancy, and have been brought up in the knowledge and belief of Christianity) passages of Scripture which relate only to Jews and Pagans. And he persists in using the language of our Saviour to Nicodemus, not only different from the sense in which it was originally intended, but different from the sense in which it is manifest that he himself understood it. "The expression, being *born again*," he says, vol. VII. p. 296 of his works, "was not first used by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus. It was in common use among the Jews when our Saviour appeared among them. When an adult heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized, he was said to be born again; by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil, was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children." And yet, in the same discourse he affirms "that baptism is not the new-birth."

He afterwards (ib. p. 302) proceeds to notice that part of the Catechism of the Church of England, where regeneration is considered to be the "inward spiritual grace," of which the act of baptism (sprinkling with water) is "the outward visible sign," and he admits it to be the doc-

trine of the Church, "that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again. And it is allowed (he says) that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants." It is with singular inconsistency, then, that he says in the very next page, "Nothing, therefore, is plainer, than that, according to the Church of England, baptism is not the new-birth." Such are the contradictions in which a man must involve himself when he would attempt to maintain an erroneous and discordant system.

Much confusion, without doubt, has been produced, by Mr. Wesley, as well as others, by an injudicious use of the words *conversion*, *regeneration*, and *new birth*, as synonymous expressions. The word *conversion* denotes a change of religion, or a change from a wicked, to a more holy life. The term *regeneration* is equivocal. It is used only twice in the New Testament. In one instance it has reference to the glorified state of the righteous: In the other, it denotes that change of state which attends the initiation into the Christian Church. In this latter sense it was invariably used in the primitive ages of the Church, and in this sense it is constantly used in our Liturgy. Since the Reformation, however, it has been sometimes used (and by sound divines of the Episcopal Church, as well as by Mr. Wesley) to denote, indiscriminately, either the change of state, or change of life, above designated. There could be little objection to its being used figuratively in the latter sense, as well as in the former, if it were not for confounding two ideas essentially distinct. Much of the late controversy on the subject of baptismal regeneration, would have become unnecessary, if the writers had but taken the trouble to declare the sense in which

they used the litigated word. It were well, therefore, that the word *regeneration*, and the equivalent phrase *new-birth*, were restricted to their primitive signification, and used exclusively to denote that *change of state* which takes place when a person is baptized into the Christian Church; and that the term conversion should be used to signify that *change of character* which takes place in any person, whether baptized or not, who turns from a wicked, to a more holy life. And the term renovation might be applied to characterize that *renewing day by day*, which is needed by the best of men, to repair the ravages of sin, and to fit them for a better world.

Mr. Wesley seems to forget that any change of state or condition takes place at baptism, and he considers all persons who have not been through his process of regeneration, as in the condition of heathens. This process of regeneration or conversion he conceives to consist in an entire change of heart and character, and that it is wrought instantaneously, and perceptibly, and by the sole and immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. "By it," he says, "our inmost souls are changed; so that from sinners we become saints, and are restored to the image of God." And he supposes the doctrine to be proved both by scripture and by experience.

But in what part of the Scriptures do we find any countenance for this doctrine? The miraculous conversion of St. Paul has been appealed to as an example. But the miracle wrought upon St. Paul was not so much for his individual salvation, as to make of him an instrument to declare the way of salvation to others. But if the case of St. Paul is to be appealed to as the model and standard of other men's conversion, then we must suppose none to be truly converted but such as are struck to the ground, and dazzled to blindness, by celestial light, and who are addressed by an

audible voice from heaven; and after all, it was subsequently, at his baptism by Ananias, that Paul himself was "filled with the Holy Ghost."

The miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit on the memorable Pentecost which succeeded the Saviour's ascension, has been appealed to as a precedent to justify the doctrine of instantaneous and miraculous conversion. But this effusion was only upon the eleven apostles, or at most upon the hundred and twenty disciples; all of whom had been previously converted, and baptized unto the christian faith. And the miracle was wrought not for their salvation, but to endue them with supernatural powers, that they might be the more especially qualified, to be the witnesses to the truth of their Master's religion, and the heralds to promulgate it to the world. With respect to the conversion of the three thousand, at the discourse of St. Peter, this was effected without any miraculous operation of the spirit, but by *the ordinary means of grace*—one of the most ordinary, indeed, *the preaching of the word*. It is to be considered also, that a great portion of the multitude who attended the preaching of Peter on this occasion, was made up of the *devout men, who were dwelling at Jerusalem*, and that they had before them the splendid miracle of men speaking freely in languages which they had never learned. We may add the general observation, that the miracles recorded in the New Testament never appear to be wrought upon men for their individual salvation, or to endue them with more holy affections, but as evidences from heaven for the truth of Christianity, and to enable its first propagators to assert their divine mission, by working miracles themselves.

That this work of conversion was by the miraculous operation of the Spirit;—instantaneous, and perceptible to the mind, Mr. Wesley suppo-

sed to be sufficiently demonstrated by facts and experience. "My dear brother," he says, writing to Samuel Wesley, "the whole question turns on a matter of fact. You deny that God does now work these effects; at least that he works them in such a manner. I affirm both, because I have heard those facts with my ears, and seen them with my eyes. I have seen (as far as it can be seen) many persons changed in a moment from the spirit of horror, fear, and despair, to the spirit of hope, joy, peace. Upon the same evidence I know this touching visions and dreams. I know several persons in whom this great change from the power of Satan unto God, was wrought either in sleep, or during a strong representation to the eye of their minds of Christ, either on the cross, or in glory. This is the fact; let any judge of it as they please." That many of these supposed facts were mere impostures, there can be no doubt. That in many cases there was a mixture of fanaticism and hypocrisy, there can be as little question. And that these seemingly opposite tempers are not so incompatible with each other as one might suppose, we have abundant evidence in the history of the *French Prophets*, as well as in the annals of other sects of religious enthusiasts; though we cannot fail to observe that, in most cases, the hypocrisy ultimately acquires the predominance. But after these abatements, we are willing to allow that in a very great portion of these supposed instances of conversion, the persons are perfectly sincere;—that they really believe such a change to have been wrought in them, and that they themselves were conscious of the operation; and that many of them continue afterwards to lead a truly religious life. The right solution, we apprehend, is very obvious. A portion of these persons were previously desirous of entering upon a religious life, and having been taught

by their instructors that such a sort of conversion was the only way to it, they brooded over the movements of their hearts till they really fancied they experienced it. The other portion consists of such as had been more atrocious and notorious sinners, but becoming suddenly alarmed and terrified at some bold and vivid description of the horrors of future punishment, or by some striking passage of scripture, and considering this the first step in the process of conversion, they imagine the other must follow of necessity. The transition is therefore a matter of course, from terror to joy, from agony to peace.

That this is the true solution, appears from this fact, that what passes in the mind during this process of conversion, and is supposed to be the work of the Holy Spirit—or in other words, the *religious experience*, of the different denominations of Christians, varies according to what they are previously taught to believe and expect. Every sect, therefore, has its peculiar experience. The experience of the Methodists differs, as they are the disciples of Wesley, or of Whitfield. The process of the *new-birth* was very different under the instruction of Wesley, and that of some of his more ignorant and misguided preachers:—nothing that he produced ever equalled the madness of the *Welch Jumpers*. And even Wesley himself inculcated very different doctrines on this subject, and produced a corresponding difference of effects, at different periods of his life.

The practice of brooding over our feelings and emotions, to ascertain the moment and the manner of our conversion, receives no countenance from the Scriptures. They refer us to the *fruits of the Spirit*, as the proper evidence of its influence on us; not to any consciousness of its operations. They aptly describe its influence, by comparing it to the wind, which "bloweth where it list-

eth," but which can be perceived only by the effects it produces—by the sound which it makes—while we "cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth."

That God directs the conduct of men, is certain: That he does it through their own volitions, is equally certain. And in framing our natures, he has so constituted us, that we are utterly unable to distinguish his influence on us, from the voluntary operations of our own minds. His Spirit, therefore, always operates through our free-agency, and in conjunction with it. Otherwise, man had been a machine, and not a free agent; and so not a proper subject of rewards and punishments.

But we would not be tedious on this article. Let the reader pursue the considerations which we have suggested. Let him examine the Scriptures, and see if he can find there any warrant for the doctrine of Mr. Wesley on this subject. Let him take an enlarged view of mankind, and see whether the experience which he relies on as so strong an argument in his favour, be not altogether contradictory, and fallacious. Let him examine whether the doctrine do not wholly destroy the free-agency, and accountability of man; and whether any such supernatural operations on the mind can possibly be cognizable by his perceptions. On the result of such reflections, we would willingly rest the argument; but we cannot forbear to add a few remarks on the consequences of the doctrine.

It is the obvious tendency of the doctrine of instantaneous and miraculous conversions, to lead men to undervalue and neglect the *ordinary means of grace*, and wait for some supernatural outpouring of the Spirit; to expect some *special miracle* to be wrought for their salvation. It imports that these ordinary means of grace are not sufficient; and casts a stigma upon the truth and justice of

God in calling us to "work out our salvation" through such means. But the ordinary means of grace are sufficient:—God has given his Son to be a propitiation for our sins; Jesus Christ has given himself for us; the Holy Spirit strives with us; the Gospel instructs and invites us; its ordinances and sacraments are tendered to us; its ministers admonish and entreat us. Thus assisted, thus warned, and thus invited, how presumptuous is the man who calls upon God to do more for him, and requires a special miracle in his behalf!

Again—the doctrine has a strong tendency to encourage spiritual pride, and self-righteousness. For the moment a man persuades himself that he is the subject of a special miracle, he is very apt to consider himself as a peculiar favourite of heaven, and to say to his less fortunate brother, "stand off; I am holier than thou." It is an overflowing source of all kinds of fanaticism. For when men mistake the vagaries of their own imaginations, for supernatural impulses, and impressions, there is no end to their extravagancies. It is the parent of bigotry. For no man thinks himself so infallible as he who imagines himself to be acting under supernatural illumination. It has been the cause of much hypocrisy and dishonesty. For under the excitement of a supposed miraculous change in their natures, men set out with high religious pretensions; and after the excitement subsides, can only maintain their consistency of character by hypocrisy: so that what begins in enthusiasm, often ends in knavery. And finally—for we need proceed no further in the consequences of this doctrine—the religious impressions thus produced, are often, too often, vague and transient. Like the "crackling of thorns under the pot," the flame is easily kindled, and soon expires. It seems to be the order of nature, that things sudden in their growth, should be sudden in decay; and Mr.

Wesley himself had frequent occasions to verify the truth of this remark, in revisiting the scenes of his previous labours. We constantly find him complaining of the backsliding of his followers, and of the little fruit that remained from such abundant harvests. It may not be amiss to refer to one case of this kind, as it tends to illustrate the effect of his doctrine upon youth. We allude to his school at Kingswood. Upon the occasion of a death in the neighbourhood, the pupils were taken to view the corpse; and what with this sight, and the "strong exhortations" of the masters, some of them appeared to be affected. Upon this they were persuaded that a work of grace was commenced, and they were urged by Wesley and their instructors, "never to rest, till they had obtained a clear sense of the pardoning love of God." The scene which ensued was more worthy of an asylum for maniacs than a place of instruction. Wesley, the masters, and the pupils, continued raving and praying together for four or five days; till the latter, he says, "were so hoarse, that they were scarce able to speak." But, he adds, they were "strong in the spirit, full of love, and of joy and peace in believing." "Thirteen," he says, "found peace with God, and four or five of them were some of the smallest there, not above seven or eight years old." Only a year afterwards, we find this memorable entry in his journal:—"I spent an hour among our children at Kingswood. It is strange! How long shall we be constrained to weave Penelope's web? What is become of the wonderful work of grace which God wrought in them last September? It is gone! It is lost! It is vanished away! There is scarce a trace of it remaining!"

We fear we have already extended this article beyond the patience of our readers. We therefore forbear to add the observations which we

had intended, upon the polity and discipline of Methodism;—but we feel ourselves called upon to subjoin a few remarks, in order to guard against a misapprehension of our sentiments.

We would not be understood, by any thing we have said, to exclude the operation of the Holy Spirit from the work of man's salvation. We are aware that it *precedes* our "good will," and *co-operates* in our good designs. On this subject we adopt the golden mean recommended by the Fathers of our Church. "All men to be monished," say they, "and chiefly preachers, that, in this high matter, they, looking on both sides, so attemper and moderate themselves, that neither they so preach the grace of God, that they take away thereby free-will, nor, on the other side, so extol free-will, that injury be done to the grace of God." We consider the grace of God as constantly efficacious, in every good thought, word, and action. We are not prepared to say it always acts with equal force, like the power of gravitation: It may be partially withdrawn for our abuse of it: It may be given in greater measure to those who seek it. We regard it as ever ready to assist all who desire it, but never absolutely coercing any. We believe this grace always accompanies the ordinances of the Gospel, when rightly administered, and duly received. Under these circumstances we believe it is communicated in baptism, and makes an essential part of that sacrament. By this sacrament, persons are brought into a covenant relation with God, and a great change is thereby produced in their religious state. To this change of state, we apply, in conformity with the language of Scripture, and the usage of the primitive writers, the terms regeneration, and new-birth, and many other strong figures which are used by the sacred Penmen in relation to it. Yet persons thus re-

generate, and in covenant with God, are still daily transgressors, and the graces of the Holy Spirit are constantly needed by them, for their *renewal day by day*. If any fall into gross sins, and lead habitually a wicked life, they have also need of conversion, in order to their salvation;—an entire change in their hearts and lives. This can only be effected by the assistance and co-operation of the Holy Spirit. It is a great change; and is designated in Scripture by figures not less strong, and not unlike to those which denote the initiation into the Christian covenant. And indeed to understand the true import of these figures, it must be borne in mind that the sacred writers are speaking in reference to persons who had renounced the errors of Judaism and Paganism, and had embraced the Christian faith; and whose conversion and baptism were generally almost cotemporaneous.

We have been obliged to express ourselves briefly: But we hope we shall be understood, and that our views will be perceived to *magnify the grace of God*, not less than the doctrine we have combatted. We are as strong advocates for the doctrines of grace as Mr. Wesley; and it is because we are so, that we enter our protest against any mere work of the imagination which may be received as a substitute for it; while we would have all men to believe that the Holy Spirit is ever ready to assist in the work of their salvation, and would earnestly call upon all to co-operate with its salutary influences.

C.

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Brief Reflections on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

NO. I.

No scene on this side the grave, deserves to excite, in the breast of the

Christian, a deeper interest, than that in which the Supper of our Lord is celebrated. In whatever light we regard this Sacrament—whether we consider it as a memorial only, or as a thankful commemoration of our Saviour's death; or as a means of conveying to us spiritual mercies; it presents itself to our minds as the most affecting and solemn ordinance of religion, and as the most exalted act of devotion in which mortals can be engaged.

This blessed Sacrament has the effect of bringing to our recollection the painful events in the life of that Saviour, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; whose body was broken, and whose blood was shed for the expiation of our sins. It has a tendency to impress upon the heart of the devout receiver a deep sense of those great favours and mercies, which he purchased for us by his blood. It is a means of strengthening the spiritual and divine life through the comfort and sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and of confirming their hopes of a blessed and glorious immortality.

To engage in this solemn and interesting act of duty and devotion, is a privilege which God in mercy has bestowed upon Christians, and in which the Lord our Redeemer has graciously invited, and affectionately commanded them to participate.—And shall Christians disregard the invitation and the command of Him, who loved them, and gave himself for them? Shall they refuse to express their gratitude in the way of his appointment, for the mercies of redeeming love? Can they excuse their neglect of the duties on which these mercies are suspended, by the plea of their unworthiness;—an unworthiness, which, if it be sufficient to justify this neglect, must arise from the absence of repentance, of faith, and of gratitude. But can such a

plea excuse them at the bar of conscience? And will it palliate their guilt at the tribunal of the last day?

It is true that they, whose hearts do not glow with gratitude for the mercies of redemption, whose faith is not strong and active, and whose repentance is not sincere and unfeigned, ought not to engage in this exalted act of devotion. But that Christian who does not possess these qualifications, has an awful account to render. His own conscience may represent to him his danger, and point his thoughts to his final award. He is undoubtedly in a state of condemnation, and exposed to endless ruin. Without them, he can have no claim to an interest in the Saviour's merits, and no title to the blessedness of heaven. A continuance in a state of impenitence, unbelief, and ingratitude, is itself a sin, which aggravates the guilt of every other; for it manifests an actual disregard of his own most important interests, and of the authority of God—a disregard, which no plea can justify, and which no excuse can palliate.

B. R.



Letter from Mrs. H. Bowdler, to Miss Elizabeth Smith, on her receiving Confirmation.

December, 1791.

You are now entering, my dear friend, on what appears to me the most important period of your life; and let me hope that my anxiety for your happiness, and the tender affection which I feel for you, will plead my excuse for troubling you with a few observations upon it. In childhood, our actions are under the controul of others, and we are scarcely answerable for them; but from the period when we renew our baptismal vow in Confirmation, and solemnly dedicate ourselves to the service of our Creator and Redeemer, by receiving the Holy Eucharist, we must be

considered as thinking and acting for ourselves;—though still subject to the commands, and happy in the advice of our parents. You have, I presume, been sufficiently instructed in all the necessary articles of faith; but I know you think deeply, on all subjects, and if you feel any doubts, or see any difficulties in the Christian Religion, this is the time in which you should endeavour to satisfy yourself with regard to them. The necessary articles of faith, appear to me, few and simple, and rather addressed to the heart than the head. The Gospel was preached to the poor and ignorant, as well as to the learned; and the seed sprang up, and bore fruit, whenever it fell on “good ground.” But those who have abilities and opportunity, should spare no pains to examine the evidences which have convinced some of the wisest men who ever lived, of the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and such an examination is particularly important in the present times. When we are convinced that the Bible is the word of God, and the rule of our faith and practice, nothing remains but to listen with reverence and devotion, to the divine instruction it contains, and to believe, on the authority of God, what our weak reason could never have discovered, nor yet fully comprehend.

The humble, pious, and virtuous mind, which willingly accepts the gracious promises of the Gospel, and is fully resolved to practise the duties that it enjoins, will seldom be disturbed by those objections to its doctrines, which have been often answered to the satisfaction of the best and wisest of human beings. The Christian religion is so suited to a feeling heart, that I think we can need no arguments for its truth, except those which are drawn from its evident tendency, to make us virtuous and happy. To love the God who created and redeemed us;—to express our gratitude for infinite obligations, by

the sincere, though imperfect service of a few years ;—to cast all our care on Him who careth for us ; and, secure in his protection, to banish every gloomy apprehension which might disturb our peace ;—this surely must appear an easy task to those who know and feel even the pleasure of an *earthly* friendship ; but when we add to this, the certainty that our endeavours to please will be not only accepted, but rewarded ;—when every Christian can say, “after a few years, perhaps after a few hours, I shall, if it is not my own fault, be happy, *perfectly* happy, to all eternity.” Surely, with such encouragements, with such hopes, no temptation should have power to draw us from our duty. Yet, when we look into the world,—when we see how little influence these principles have in society,—how seldom they guard the heart against the allurements of pleasure, or support it under the pressure of affliction ; it must be evident to every thinking mind, that very great and constant care is necessary, to preserve through life those good resolutions, which I believe most people form when they enter into it. For this purpose, allow me to recommend *constant devotion*. A few minutes, spent every morning and evening, in this duty, will be the best preservative against the temptations to which we must be exposed ; but in order to make it really useful, it should be accompanied with self-examination, and followed by such an habitual sense of the presence of God, as may influence our conduct in every part of our life. In our gayest, as well as in our gravest moments ;—in our studies, and in our pleasures ;—in the tender intercourse of friendship ;—in the sprightly sallies of a conversation which seems only intended for amusement ;—still we should be able to turn our thoughts with heartfelt satisfaction to that tender Parent to whom we owe all our guiltless pleasures. “Whether ye

eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” The business in which we cannot ask his protection and assistance, cannot be an innocent pursuit : the amusement for which we dare not thank Him, cannot be an innocent pleasure. This rule strongly impressed on the mind, and applied to every circumstance in life, will be a constant guard over virtue in all situations, and a constant check to every thought as well as action, which is contrary to our duty. Such, I think, should be the piety of a true Christian, and such piety will undoubtedly afford the highest pleasures we are capable of feeling in this world, while it guards that virtue which will secure our happiness in the next. But to entitle ourselves to this intercourse with our God, we must carefully and constantly attend to the state of our souls, by frequent and diligent self-examination. This appears to me a point of great importance at all times, and particularly, as preparatory to receiving the Holy Sacrament. At our entrance into life (by which I mean the period that follows the total dependence of childhood,) it is essential to obtain a just idea of our own character, and of our own particular duties. Nobody is so perfect as not to have a tendency to some fault. Pride, passion, fretfulness, obstinacy, indolence, and many other failings, are perhaps born with us ; and whoever has not discovered one or more of these in his heart, certainly does not know himself. Let us then, as the first step towards wisdom and virtue, carefully study our own character, and determine where our principal danger lies,—remembering that “He who has discovered a fault, and entreated God’s assistance to conquer it, has engaged Omnipotence on his side.” The next point to be considered, is our particular situation, and the duties that it requires. It is vain to suppose, we could do better in different circumstances, or to think

that our imaginary duties will cover our real faults ; we are not to choose our own part in life, but to act properly, in that which God hath assigned to us. What are my particular duties ? How can I best serve God ? How can I most contribute to the happiness of those with whom I am connected ? How can I employ my time and my talents to the best advantage ? What are the errors into which I am most likely to fall ? Do I hurt those whom I am most bound to please, by pride, peevishness and contempt ; or do I make them happy, by constant kindness, gentleness, and long-suffering ? These are questions which every human being should ask his own heart, and which only his own heart can answer. From an examination of this kind, I should wish every one, who really aims at Christian perfection, to make out in writing, a plan of life, suited to his particular situation and character, and resolutely determine to act up to it. This requires time and reflection ; but once done, our task will be much easier afterwards. A few minutes every night should be spent in considering how far we have conformed to that plan through the day,—which I think is most easily discovered by considering how the day has been spent ; for every thing, be it ever so trifling, if it is done at all, may be done *well*, or *ill*. Did I attend to my devotions in the morning ? Have I done good, and contributed to the happiness of others ; or have I given pain to any human being by unkindness ? Have I been surprized by those faults, whatever they are, which I have most reason to dread ; or have I carefully avoided them ? Such questions constantly asked, and impartially answered, will prevent our acquiring wrong habits ; and nothing is *unconquerable*, which is not *habitual*. Bishop Andrews says, “ Sleep is so like death, that I dare not venture on it without prayer :” And I think it would be well if we consid-

ered it in that light, and made our peace with God at the end of every day, as if it were the last we should enjoy. I am sure the habit of doing this, would greatly lessen the horrors of that awful period, when we *must* make up our account, however painful it may be to us. When habit has made this easy, little more will be necessary to guard us against that self-deceit which is our most dangerous enemy ; but at stated times, as at the beginning of every year, and when we intend to receive the Sacrament, it will be useful to take a general review of our past life, and compare it with the plan we had determined to pursue, in order to see how far we have kept the good resolutions we had formed, and in what respect it is most necessary to guard our future conduct.

Perhaps, my dear young friend, I have said nothing, which your own good sense would not point to you much better than I am capable of doing it, and I have taken a liberty, for which I can only plead the advantage which very moderate talents *must* gain from experience. I have lived longer in the world than you, and have felt the ill effects of many errors which I hope you will avoid ; but I have also sometimes realized the good effects of those principles, and that line of conduct, which I wish to recommend to you, and in which I trust Providence will guide you to eternal happiness.



*Report of the General Convention,
ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.*

(Continued.)

THE diocese of New-York consists at present, of the Bishop, fifty-six Presbyters, fifteen Deacons, and one hundred and eighteen organized congregations.

Since the last General Convention, the following persons have been admitted, by the bishops of this diocese, to the holy order of Deacons :—Asa-

hel Davis, Samuel Nichols, William H. Northrop, (since deceased) George H. Norton, David Brown, Leverett Bush, Thomas Osborne, (since removed to South-Carolina,) Intrepid Morse, (since removed to Ohio,) Charles M'Cabe, Alexis P. Proal, George Upfold, M. D., John Grigg, jun., James W. Eastburn, (since removed to Virginia, and deceased,) George B. Andrews, (since removed to Connecticut,) James I. Bowden, (since removed to Maryland,) John V. E. Thorn, (since removed to Pennsylvania,) William Richmond, (since removed to Pennsylvania,) Deodatus Babcock, William Barlow, William H. De Lancy, Frederick T. Tiffany, and Benjamin P. Aydelott, M. D., belonging to this diocese; and John Toland, of the Island of St. Martins, West-Indies; and, by letters dismissory from the Right Rev. the Bishop of that diocese, Lemuel Birge, of Rhode-Island.—Total, 24.

Within the same period, the following persons have been ordained priests:—The Rev. Joshua M. Rogers, the Rev. Samuel Johnston, (since removed to Ohio,) the Rev. Ezekiel G. Gear, the Rev. Gregory T. Bedell, (since removed to North-Carolina,) the Rev. Nathaniel F. Bruce, M. D. (since removed to Connecticut,) the Rev. Charles W. Hamilton, the Rev. David Brown, the Rev. George H. Norton, the Rev. Henry Anthon, the Rev. Thomas Breintnall, from Pennsylvania, the Rev. Hugh Smith, (since removed to Georgia,) the Rev. Lucius Smith, from Connecticut, and the Rev. Samuel Nichols, of this diocese: and the Rev. John Toland, of St. Martin's, W. I.—Total, 14.

The following clergymen have been instituted to the following rectorships: the Rev. Evan M. Johnson, to that of St. James's Church, Newtown, Queens county; the Rev. William B. Lacey, to that of St. Peter's Church, Albany; the Rev. Thomas Breintnall, to that of Zion

Church, New-York; the Rev. Russell Wheeler, to that of Zion Church, Butternutts, Otsego county; the Rev. David Brown, to that of St. James's Church, Hyde Park, Dutchess county; and the Rev. Gilbert H. Sayres, to that of Grace Church, Jamaica, Queen's county.

In addition to the above, the following clergymen have taken charge of the parishes annexed to their respective names: the Rev. Nathaniel Huse, from Connecticut, of St. Paul's Church, Paris, Oneida county; the Rev. Samuel Phinney from Pennsylvania, of St. Andrew's Church, Col-denham, Orange county; the Rev. John Brown, of St. Thomas's Church, New-Windsor, Orange county; the Rev. Charles M'Cabe, deacon, of St. James's Church, Milton, Saratoga county; the Rev. Cyrus Stebbins, of Christ Church, Hudson, Columbia county; the Rev. Alexis P. Proal, deacon, of St. John's Church, Johnstown, Montgomery county; the Rev. George Upfold, M. D., deacon, of Trinity Church, Lansinburgh, Rensselaër county, and Grace Church, Waterford, Saratoga county; the Rev. David Huntington, of St. Peter's Church, Waterville, and St. John's Church, Delhi, Delaware county; the Rev. Henry M. Shaw, deacon, from North-Carolina, of Trinity Church, Utica, Oneida county; the Rev. Lucius Smith, of St. Peter's Church, Auburn, Cayuga county; the Rev. Ravaud Kearney, of Trinity Church, New-Rochelle, Westchester county; the Rev. Henry U. Onderdonk, of St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn, Kings county: the Rev. William Barlow, deacon, of St. John's Church, Canandaigua, Ontario county; the Rev. Samuel Nichols, of St. Matthew's Church, Bedford, Westchester county; the Rev. John Grigg, jun. deacon, of St. John's Church, Philipsburgh, Westchester county; the Rev. Jonathan M. Wainwright, from Connecticut, (assistant minister) of Trinity Church, New-York; the

Rev. William A. Clark, of Christ Church, Ballston Spa, Saratoga county; the Rev. George Otis, deacon, from the eastern diocese, of St. Paul's Church, Waddington, St. Lawrence county; and the Rev. Frederick T. Tiffany, deacon, of Christ Church, Cooperstown, Otsego county.

A number of the clergy of this diocese continue to prosecute the arduous and all important labours of the missionary service. Besides older missionaries, whose names appear in the last triennial report, there have been engaged in this service, since the last General Convention, the Rev.

Amos Pardee, from Massachusetts, the Rev. George H. Norton, the Rev. Leverett Bush, deacon, the Rev. Deodatus Babcock, deacon, and the Rev. Francis H. Cuming, deacon, from New-Jersey.

The following persons are at present, candidates for orders in this diocese:—James P. Cotter, James P. F. Clarke, William B. Thomas, George W. Doane, Moses Burt, G. M. Robinson, Eleazar Williams, Ezra B. Kellogg, John Garfield, William Jarvis, William Thompson, Richard Bury, Lawson Carter, Benjamin Dorr, Peter Williams, jun. William L. Johnson, Alonzo Potter.

(To be continued.)

POETRY.

Hymn for Easter.

Who bursts the barriers of the tomb?
Who casts aside th' encumbering clod?
And rises o'er the gathering gloom,
Clad in the panoply of God?
Can this be He, whose infant eye
First woke on Bethlehem's manger scene?
The child of scorn and poverty?
The meek and lowly Nazarine?

Who, when the tir'd bird sought its nest,
And the rude fox to covert fled,
Still wander'd, homeless, and distressed,
And found *not where to lay his head!*
Is this the sufferer, doom'd to share
The bitter cup of Jewish scorn;
And, guiltless as a lamb, to bear
The scourge, the buffet, and the thorn?

I saw him, in an awful hour,
To torturing pangs resign his breath!
Whence hath he this Almighty power
To rend the victory from death?
Around his grave, with cautious feet,
A weak and mournful band appear:
But angel voices answer sweet,—
“Your Lord is ris'n—he is *not* here.”

Say—heard ye not the harps of gold,
 Whose tones through heav'n with rapture glide ?
 Ye everlasting gates unfold !
 Eternal portals, open wide !
 The King of glory enters in—
 He, who the wilds of earth did trace ;
 And yield to Pain, and vanquish Sin,
 To ransom a rebellious race.

The grave her mouldering curtain draws,
 Where night and horror shuddering reign :
 But trembling Doubt, and Terror, pause ;
 And murmuring Grief resigns her pain :
 For there the Saint, in peaceful clay,
 Rests, free from Error, Care and Strife,
 While Jesus saith—" I am the way,
 The Resurrection, and the Life."

For the Churchman's Magazine.

THUS in the feeble bark of life we sail,
 On the broad surface of the changeful deep :—
 Now breezes waft us—now the roaring gale
 Drives us along with one tremendous sweep ;
 Both gale and breeze in unison combine,
 To urge our passage to the land divine.

Since then our haven is th' eternal shore,
 The peaceful region of immortal rest,
 Where rise no billows—where no tempests roar—
 But where celestial rapture fills the breast ;—
 Why should we pant for Zephyr's gentle breath,
 When the rude tempest, with its thundering sound,
 Would sooner bring us to the gates of death,
 And land us quicker on the heav'nly ground !

If then my fragile vessel float along,
 Urg'd by thy Spirit to the port divine ;
 To thee, my God, I'll raise th' eternal song :—
 For whether suns shall shine, or tempests beat,
 My consolations shall be strong and sweet,
 Since I shall be for ever thine.

EREMUS.

New-Haven, March 14, 1821.